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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## CARTON PIERRE.

BY JAMES CARRUTHERS.

THE application of carton pierre to interior architectural relief ornamentation followed shortly on a similar use of papier-maché, the manufacture of which, though long carried on in the East, particularly in Kashmir, as in the making of toilette-boxes and ornamental cases, was not introduced into France and England until 1772. The recommendation of carton pierre, for architectural decoration, is its greater toughness, strength and durability, and resistance to dampness, containing, as it does, in addition to paper pulp, sized with glue, acetate of lead, resin and stone-dust—preferably that of marble. The treatment, too, is different. It is not pressed into the mold in the form of a series of sheets attached to one another, but as a pasty mass, which, after being subjected to pressure is artificially dried, and then immersed in oil in order to impart to it additional hardness. The amount of each constituent in the composition varies with different manufacturers.

Where a design of extreme delicacy is to be produced, a sufficient quantity of the carton pierre, after being thoroughly dried, is reduced to an impalpable powder, which is then mixed with a strong size of glue and transferred to the mold.

The designs are fashioned in soft clay, or carved in wood, and casts taken in sulphur, or plaster of Paris. Before introducing the pasty mass into a mold, the surface of the latter is oiled.

The reliefs are attached to wall and ceiling by a plastic layer of the same material and by brads inserted in finely-drilled holes, which are afterwards filled in at top with the composition. Previously to being put in place, the surface of the design is scoured with rottenstone and water, and then with the finest sandpaper. Many designs are made exclusively for individuals who stipulate that there shall be no repeats in houses other than those they own or occupy. The surface is painted similarly to plaster.

Although the material proves so valuable an adjunct to architectural decoration, the number of manufacturers is few. This is chiefly owing to the great number and variety of modern methods for producing plastic relief, Stereo-relief being perhaps the most important.

We refer our readers to an article on the manufacture and application of Stereo-relief published in our issue of December, 1890.

## A ROMANCE IN BRIC-A-BRAC.

A TALL pink shepherdess on a screen  
Was in love with a blue Japanese on a jar—  
And the jar stood high on the cabinet shelf,  
So they gazed at each other from afar.

An observing stork with long red legs  
(On the gray wall panel) was hung between,  
And he saw each glance that the Japanese gave  
Toward the shepherdess pink on the fire screen,

And the tender look that the shepherdess pink  
Threw upward toward the Japanese;  
So a kindly interest filled his soul,  
Though his presence the lovers did not please.

All Winter continued the sweet romance—  
Were it not for the stork—whom they thought—de trop—  
But, except in an upward and downward glance,  
No outward sign did the lovers show.

But the mild Spring days brought house-cleaning time,  
And the cabinet pottery all was piled  
At the foot of the screen by the shepherdess—  
And the stork with the red legs knowingly smiled.

For though near, yet farther than ever apart  
Were the twain, as accident placed them now—  
The shepherdess couldn't look down, because  
She'd looked up so long she didn't know how.

Still the Japanese boy was compelled to look down,  
Though no shepherdess pink met his ardent glance,  
The red-legged stork, though he longed that he might,  
Could do nothing to forward the little romance.

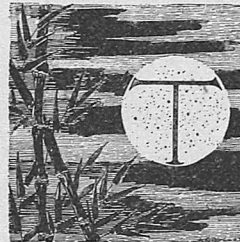
So the moment supreme to the loving pair  
Passed, bringing no ease to the burdened heart,  
Though nearer than ever they'd been before  
An ironical fate kept them farther apart!

And now that the bric-a-brac is replaced  
On the cabinet shelves—'tis sad but true—  
The blue and white jar is turned around,  
And no longer the screen can the Japanese view.

A large, blue rose meets the shepherdess' eye  
In her ever-affectionate upward gaze—  
"If I had but looked down," is her one sad thought,  
While the Jap on the other side of the vase

Remembers the moment with grief and pain  
That he let slip by without word or sign;  
The red-legged stork still trusts in Fate—  
He waits for another house-cleaning time.

## OUR COLORED SUPPLEMENT.—A CEILING IN FRESCO AND PLASTIC RELIEF.



THE very beautiful colored supplement which we present our readers in this issue of our Journal, as an example of modern interior decorative work, represents the transition at present taking place from flat fresco work to plastic relief. The decorators are everywhere forsaking the slow, self-sacrificing fresco method in favor of the rapid, effective and more profitable method of plastic relief, which is really the outcome of a rapid age, and the resulting artistic competition among decorators to fit their work to the demands of the hour.

The conscientious decorator, in devising a scheme of rapid and effective work will not lose sight of its artistic possibilities and in the ceiling design here reproduced we beg our readers to notice that the decorator has here produced a style of decoration which combines honest and serious artistic labor with that rapid development made necessary by the demands of the age.

The plate is an exquisite ceiling which has been designed and executed by Mr. George Halbert, the Brooklyn decorator. It is a combination of flat tinting, frescoing and plastic relief, and as such, is an illustration of modern decorative methods as applied to walls and ceilings. As will be seen, the ground of the ceiling is a warm, rich blending of tints from cream in the centre to golden yellow at the cornice, the coloring being at once sumptuous and delightful.

The design consists of a large square panel with a wide border of hand moulded plastic relief inclosing a smaller oval panel in flat fresco work. The outer border is formed of lines of golden pearls, having in each corner intertwined wreaths of golden bay leaves in moulded relief with flowing gold ribbons, also in gold relief. The inner oval panel is formed of a simple line of golden pearls in gold relief, outside of which is an oval wreath of pink roses in fresco tints.

The plastic composition used by Mr. Halbert in these delicate mouldings and tracteries is moulded *in situ* by hand. It rapidly becomes as hard as stone, with a surface as smooth as satin, the original color being of a dark cream tint. With such a material as this in hand, the modern decorator is prepared for every exigency of ornamental relief work. The decorator nowadays carries his mouldings in plastic form and moulds the material to fill the position, thus producing original effects in each piece of work.

The cornice of the apartment containing the ceiling referred to, is picked out in the tints of the ceiling. The frieze is of Greek ornament in gold plastic relief, the ground being a soft blending of cream and yellow tints. The walls are flatted a rich, solid, golden-yellow tint. There is a white and gilt Empire mantelpiece in carved wood and the hearth of the fire-place is laid in white enameled tiles. The floor is covered with a parquetry flooring in white oak, with mahogany mosaic border. The furniture, which is of white oak, is upholstered in a bright vellum tint, and the floor covered with a Turkish rug.

We need scarcely say that work of this description has given Mr. Halbert an established reputation as an original decorator in the city of Brooklyn. He finds constant occupation for a large staff of workmen in remodeling and decorating interiors, both in Brooklyn and New York City.